
Education Committee

HB 2998

Brief Description: Revising the high school assessment system.

Sponsors: Representatives P. Sullivan, Simpson, Santos, McCoy, Chase, Morrell, B. Sullivan, Hasegawa, Kenney and Green.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to develop a process for certifying assessment options for use instead of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) for graduation purposes.
- Beginning in 2007-08, students must be permitted to select a certified option instead of the WASL. Students in the class of 2008 or 2009 can select a certified option to retake the WASL.
- Makes the Certificate of Academic Achievement a graduation requirement when the Legislature has approved the certification process; the SBE has certified at least three options; and students have been given at least one academic year to complete one of the assessment options.

Hearing Date: 1/23/06

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, most students will be required to obtain a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) in order to graduate from a public high school in the state. Students must meet the state standards in reading, writing, and mathematics on the high school Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) to earn a CAA. Science will be added in 2010.

Starting in 2006, students will have four opportunities to retake the WASL in the content areas where they did not meet the state standard. A student who achieves the standard but wishes to improve his or her score must pay for the retake.

In 2004, the Legislature also authorized the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to develop one or more objective alternative assessments for high school students to demonstrate they meet the state academic standards instead of relying on the WASL for this purpose. To use an

alternative, a student must take the WASL at least twice. The Legislature must formally approve implementation of any alternative assessment.

Beginning with the class of 2006, a student's transcript must display the highest WASL score and proficiency level for each content area. Beginning with the class of 2008, if a student achieves the highest proficiency level on the first try, the transcript includes a scholar's designation.

Summary of Bill:

Beginning in the 2007-08 school year, the high school assessment system must provide certified assessment options for the purpose of demonstrating a student has met state learning standards.

Certification Process

Before the beginning of the 2007-08 school year, the State Board of Education (SBE) must establish a procedure for certifying assessment options that lead to a CAA. Certification is based on demonstrated alignment with the state learning standards, including school-to-work goals. The level of student performance necessary to meet the standards shall be comparable across all assessments. The options will include portfolios, industry certification tests, other assessments used to determine readiness for workforce entry or higher education, and college entrance exams.

The SBE establishes an advisory committee to develop the certification process, including educators, parents, and representatives of cultural, linguistic, and racial minority groups, and the community of persons with disabilities. In developing the process, the SBE shall also:

1. Review national tests to determine whether students who perform at specified levels have demonstrated they meet state learning standards;
2. Evaluate research on existing assessment systems in other states, including states that have added multiple measures to state-developed tests and have moved to other assessment methods. The analysis includes the effects of the assessments on improvement of student performance; disaggregation of results for subgroups of the student population; cost; and the ability of the assessments to provide diagnostic information. The analysis will be done with assistance from a nationally recognized center at a public or nonprofit university that has conducted similar research;
3. Identify and adopt or develop culturally relevant assessments for students from demographic groups that have had difficulty with the WASL and are over-represented as not meeting the state standard on the WASL;
4. Review electronic portfolios to determine whether this method of collecting and presenting student work can be adapted for use as a certified assessment option; and
5. Review internship, service learning, and apprenticeship models to determine whether they can be used as an assessment option.

The requirement that SPI develop objective alternative assessments for legislative approval is eliminated. Instead, the Legislature formally approves the process established by the SBE for certifying and adopting assessment options.

Implementation

If the Legislature has approved the certification process, students in the graduating classes of 2008 and 2009 have the opportunity to use a certified assessment option instead of retaking the WASL to demonstrate they meet the state's standards to earn a CAA. The requirement that a student take the WASL twice before using an alternative is eliminated.

Beginning in the 2007-08 school year, students must have the option to select a certified assessment option instead of the WASL to demonstrate they meet the state standards and earn a CAA. School districts must make the certified assessment options available to all high school students in the district.

The CAA becomes a graduation requirement when the Legislature has approved the certification process; the SBE has certified at least three assessment options; and students have been given at least one academic year to complete one of the assessment options.

The requirement that student transcripts display the highest WASL scores or a scholar's designation is repealed. The requirement that students must pay to retake the WASL to improve their scores is also repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.